

Comprehensive Situation Report No. 6  
**Devils Lake Flood 1995**  
Division of Emergency Management  
and  
State Water Commission  
Incident No. 95-04  
Date: March 31, 1995 Time: 11:00 a.m.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer  
State Capitol  
Bismarck, ND

ATTENTION: Appropriate State and Local Agencies

1. **NATURE OF DISASTER**: Potential flooding in 1995, based on expected 1433.0 or greater mean sea level (msl) for Devils Lake.
2. **DEATH AND INJURIES**: A person in Nelson County was injured when a vehicle struck a road washout.
3. **DAMAGE**: The water level of Devils Lake is 1431.67 msl as of March 31, 1995.

Benson County: Benson County officials report inundated roads, road washouts, and saturated road beds. Agricultural land is flooding around Devils Lake and in low lying areas. Basement seepage is reported in Minnewaukan. Water is up on the banks of the lagoon at Minnewaukan.

It has been reported that Bureau of Indian Affairs roads and private roads on the Fort Totten Indian Reservation are rapidly deteriorating due to wet conditions. At least 3 families are isolated. At least 8 homes have basement seepage problems. One family moved from their home when their well water became contaminated. Two homes are reported to have sewage problems.

Nelson County: Nelson County officials report inundated roads, road washouts, and saturated road beds. Sheet flooding of agricultural land is extensive. This includes both crop land and grasslands used for pasture and hay. Basement seepage is reported throughout the county.

Ramsey County: In Ramsey County federal aid system, county, and township road damages are reported to be extensive. Road inundation, washouts, and saturated road beds are common throughout the county. The Devils Lake school district has limited its busses to paved roads only. Twenty-five county and township roads are under water. Road closure in the Fenster Slough area of Nixon Township and in the Edmore area was necessary. The Fenster Slough is also flooding agricultural land and a home. Ice jams are forming on coulees in the Devils Lake Basin.

Cities in Ramsey County are experiencing water problems. The city of Devils Lake is experiencing above average inflows to the lagoon due to area run-off into the system. The cities of Devils Lake, Edmore, Churches Ferry, Crary, Hampden and Lawton are all reporting extensive basement seepage. Localized flooding in Churches Ferry and Crary is reported due to blocked drains and culverts. High water in the slough south of Lawton is threatening to overtop the dike built in 1993 putting the grain elevator and other structures at risk.

4. **RESOURCES COMMITTED:**

**Local:** In addition to those previously reported: the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

**State:** No change from previous reports.

**Federal:** No change from previous reports.

5. **VOLUNTEER ACTIONS:** The Salvation Army delivered 300 cleanup kits to the City of Devils Lake. The American Red Cross delivered 200 cleanup kits to Nelson County.

6. **MAJOR ACTIONS:**

**Local:** On March 30, 1995, the Nelson Board of County Commissioners issued a declaration re-affirming their position that Nelson County is in a state of disaster.

Benson, Nelson, and Ramsey County officials have committed their resources in the flood fight. They are performing emergency repairs on damaged critical transportation routes, flagging and barricading roads, limiting truck and school bus traffic, monitoring water levels, removing water that has a direct affect on people by draining or pumping, and performing a public awareness campaign on protective actions individuals can take.

City of Minnewaukan officials conducted a public meeting on March 23, 1995 to inform the citizens on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommended actions to prevent damage to their sewage lagoon.

Officials of the cities of Lawton, in Ramsey County, and Minnewaukan, in Benson County, have expressed interest in enrolling in the National Flood Insurance Program.

**State:** A temporary State Flood Coordination Center (SFCC) has been established at Camp Gilbert C. Grafton as of March 27, 1995. Staff at the center, representing agencies such as the National Guard, Division of Emergency Management, State Water Commission, Parks and Recreation, Game and Fish Department, Department of Transportation, Department of Health and Laboratories, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will coordinate state-level operational support activities to local governments impacted by rising water in the Devils Lake Basin this spring and summer. Other state agencies and federal agencies may be represented as the situation changes.

A weekly coordination meeting was held at the State Flood Coordination Center in Camp Grafton on March 30, 1995. State agencies represented included ND Division of Emergency Management, Department of Transportation, State Water Commission, ND Parks and Recreation, and ND Game and Fish Department. The St. Paul U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was also represented. Local officials representing Benson, Nelson, and Ramsey counties and the city of Minnewaukan participated. Key information exchanges between the agencies included discussions on state facilities being affected and the related impacts. Several important items including traffic management, repair schedules, and other priorities were coordinated among the participants. The coordination meetings are scheduled weekly at 1:30 p.m. on Thursdays.

A State Water Commission staff member provided public information regarding the National Flood Insurance Program on the "coffee time" public affairs program of KDLR AM radio in Devils Lake on March 27, 1995. During the program, Lake Region property owners were urged to contact their property insurance agent if they are interested in flood insurance.

Governor Schafer has formally requested U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assistance under PL 84-99 to support flood fight operations in conjunction with the problems at Devils Lake. Specifically, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers emergency operations assistance is requested to preserve the integrity of the sewage lagoon at Minnewaukan.

**Federal:** In their March 24, 1995 Flood Outlook, the National Weather Service has projected that Devils Lake will rise to 1433.0 by June.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is working with Minnewaukan officials to construct a clay embankment on the outside of the lagoon dikes.

7. **ASSISTANCE NEEDED:** None at this time.
8. **OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
9. **OTHER INFORMATION:** The Devils Lake region received between 8-10 inches of snow from March 23 and March 26, 1995, with a moisture content of almost 1.25 inches.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

Douglas C. Friez, Director  
ND Division of Emergency Management  
328-3300

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David Sprynczynatyk, Secretary  
State Water Commission  
328-2750